

Aurora Volunteer Fire Department
PO Box 33
Aurora, Maine 04408

Annual Report for 2019-2020

The AVFD respectfully submits the following Annual Report covering July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020:

| Type of Call | Number |
|--|---------------|
| Structure Fires | 2 |
| Chimney Fires | 0 |
| Vehicle Fires | 0 |
| Brush or Forest Fires | 3 |
| Trash or Rubbish Fire | 1 |
| Nuisance or False Fire Alarms | 1 |
| Hazardous Material Spill | 0 |
| Carbon Monoxide Incident | 0 |
| Lightning Strike of building, no fire | 1 |
| EMS Calls (not associated with vehicle accidents) | 21 |
| Vehicle Accidents (with personal injuries) | 8 |
| Vehicle Accidents (without personal injuries) | 7 |
| Wires and Trees Down in road | 8 |
| Water Problem | 0 |
| Assist Police, another agency with EMS standby | 3 |
| Cancelled En Route to Call | 3 |
| School details, fundraisers | 2 |
| Total # of calls | 60 |
| Mutual Aid – Received (mostly Osborn responding with us) | 9 |
| Mutual Aid – Provided (includes the 2 structure fires) | 9 |

The AVFD has 8 active volunteer members, plus two of the members of the Osborn VFD are also members of AVFD. Three have fire fighter training, with two members being FF2s, one a FF1, and two of our members have forest fire training certifications. One other member has advanced hazardous materials training. The department has one Basic Emergency Medical Technician and two Emergency Medical Responders. Osborn also has an Emergency Medical Responder.

This year we did not receive any FEMA grant money. We have an application in process to replace aging extrication equipment and other tools. We updated more of our forest fire equipment utilizing a state forestry grant which pays half of the price.

Hancock County contracts with us to provide emergency services for T22 and T28 MD. Responses to accidents on Route 9 east of the Whalesback in Aurora and these townships account for about a half dozen calls a year.

In 2019 the leaking roof on the older part of the station was replaced with a new metal roof. During 2019, we had a generous business donation from Peruvian Link that supported the tuition for two of our members attending the 2020 Hancock County Fire Academy. The department also purchased turnout gear for these members at a cost of about \$2,700 each. All firefighters need protective gear and students cannot attend the Academy without NFPA compliant gear (meaning less than 10 years old), plus gear has to be custom fitted to the person. Both students got through the first half of the Academy only to have the Academy shut down in March due to COVID-19. They will be allowed to attend in 2020 for no additional cost, but one of the students has already moved out of state and may not return.

Our most crucial lack at this time, like most volunteer fire departments, is volunteers to fight fires and drive and man the trucks that we have. We need EMS trained volunteers to go to medical calls and support members to direct traffic, assist trained volunteers and maintain equipment and our building. The towns have assisted us by providing slightly higher payments since 2018 for us to work with, allowing us to pay for mileage and more training for members, but now we face a personnel shortage that can't be solved by asking for more funding or donations.

The department has been able to continue through the years because a faithful core group of volunteers would not give up on the idea of helping their communities and providing emergency response within 15 minutes rather than the hour or more it might take other resources to respond. The problem is that these core people are aging and becoming unable to do the "heavy lifting" needed at fire and some medical calls. Most members cannot leave work during the day, so we have very few people available to respond during work hours.

The department desperately needs more members to help cover calls or help with maintenance and administration. We will take help with anything: painting and building repair, truck maintenance, cooking for trainings and fundraisers, cleaning, etc. Members can help by driving the trucks and learning to pump if they aren't physically able to man hoses and raise ladders. I would also be happy to take names and contact information from people who want to help but not join as a member. However, if someone is not a member, they would not be covered by the protection the department's insurance provides.

Those residents that live within 5 miles of the AVFD station may have an increase in fire insurance rates if the AVFD cannot maintain enough trained firefighters.

A word on COVID 19: So far, our county and rural towns have avoided much of the virus, but this is primarily because the state has been conservative with quarantines and re-openings. Please keep in mind that the virus doesn't care about your political affiliation or personal beliefs about preventative measures, and we have many older people and people with chronic health problems in town that are at serious risk. If one person at a place of business in town became infected, the virus could spread rapidly through our working population. So please, practice social distancing and wear a mask when you cannot distance.

Deborah Palman, Chief, AVFD
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